EXTERNAL PERIMETER MONITORING SYSTEM

Inventor: Randal D. Boyd
400 Kittredge Court
Knoxville, Tennessee 37922
Knox County, Tennessee
Citizenship: U.S.A.

Christopher E. Mainini
609 Tree Ridge Road
Knoxville, Tennessee 37922
Knox County, Tennessee
Citizenship: U.S.A.

EXTERNAL PERIMETER MONITORING SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of Invention

This invention relates to a system for monitoring an outdoor perimeter. More particularly, this invention relates to a system for monitoring activity along a wire bounded perimeter.

2. Description of the Related Art

Residential and light commercial security systems have become an increasingly popular addition to many homes and businesses. These systems are typically based on the electronic detection of a breach in the perimeter of the structure. A breach is detected at either the perimeter itself or the interior of the structure. The perimeter is generally defined as the entrance/egress points to a structure such as doors and windows. Perimeter breaches are generally detected by magnetic sensors which monitor the opening and closing of doors and windows and by frequency sensors attuned to the sound of glass breakage. Interior breaches are generally detected by heat and motion detectors which monitor moving objects having a temperature greater

than the ambient temperature. While providing a warning of intrusion, both the detection of perimeter and interior breaches occur after damage to the structure or entry has been obtained.

Similarly, motion sensors are used to turn on outdoor lighting thereby providing a deterrent to intrusion onto the property. However, these sensors are indiscriminate in that they may be triggered by small animals, children, or other moving objects which are not considered security risks. Further, because of the difficulty in accurately setting the range of each sensor, the limited sensor range, and the arcuate detection zone of each sensor, setting up a comprehensive coverage area limited to the boundaries of one's property is difficult at best. Finally, it should be noted that while the external sensors could be connected to a central alarm system, the inability to discriminate between legitimate security risks and stray animals and the difficulty in defining the protection area render such a system unreliable.

Ideally, a monitoring system could identify and announce activity along the monitored perimeter. Accordingly, there is a need for a monitoring system which allows a boundary of protection to be easily defined. Further, there is a need for a monitoring system capable of identifying potential threats to security so as to avoid false alarms.

Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide a monitoring system which permits a fixed protection boundary to be defined.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a monitoring system which detects activity along the borders of the protection area.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a monitoring system which discriminates between various types of activity.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a monitoring system which can be integrated with an existing residential and light commercial security system.

A still further object of the present invention is to provide a monitoring system which can be added into an existing pet containment system.

Yet a still further object of the present invention to provide a monitoring system which defines the protected area using a single wire.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A system for detecting activity along a wire-bounded perimeter is provided. The system includes a single-conductor wire which bounds an area defined as the protected area. Electrically connected to the wire at predetermined locations is a series of sensors and a transponder.

The transponder serves as the controller for the system. Each of the sensors is provided with a unique identification, or address, allowing the transponder to communicate with a selected sensor. Communication is accomplished using an addressable data packet transmitted along the wire using a frequency shift keying technique.

The sensors of the present invention each include a communication interface, a transceiver, a DC power source, and an

activity measuring device. There are two general types of sensors used in the present invention. First are the wired sensors wherein the communication interface is a transformer physically coupled to the wire. Next are the mobile sensors which operate without actual physical connection to the wire. The communication interface of the mobile sensors is a single-turn, inductive antenna placed near, but not directly over, the wire and oriented in a substantially vertical orientation with respect to the wire, thereby creating a mutual inductive coupling allowing bidirectional communication. The signal transmitted through the wire generally includes a power signal, or carrier, to which a modulated data signal is attached. The timing of the data signals is controlled by the transponder.

Each of the sensors is provided with a unique identification, or address, allowing the transponder to communicate with a particular sensor. Communication is accomplished using a data packet having a header containing at least a frame synchronization code, at least one command character, at least one address character, and a security code. The command packet is transmitted through the wire using any appropriate modulation scheme.

When a request is received by the sensor, the activity measurement device is activated to detect local activity through one of a variety of detection methods. The activity measuring device is positioned and adjusted such that activity near or approaching the perimeter of the protected area from the outside is detected. The detected activity signal is then encoded by the microprocessor and transmitted to the transponder by the transceiver. The transponder

comparison device compares the measured activity signal to exemplary activity profiles from selected activity sources, such as vehicles, animals, and humans. A result generated from the comparison is generated and interpreted by the transponder processing device. Should activity be detected, the transponder processing device then generates an alert which is transmitted to a user through the indicator and/or to an external conventional residential and light commercial security system through the external interface.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

The above-mentioned features of the invention will become more clearly understood from the following detailed description of the invention read together with the drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a system for monitoring a wire bounded perimeter showing various features of the transponder of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram of a system for monitoring a wire bounded perimeter showing various embodiments of the sensors of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a block diagram of a sensor showing various features of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a block diagram of an alternate embodiment of the system of the present invention incorporating a pet containment transmitter to provide additional functionality; and

Figure 5 is a block diagram of an alternate embodiment of the

transponder of Figure 1 replacing the memory and comparison devices with a digital signal processor.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A system for a monitoring a wire-bounded perimeter is illustrated generally at **10** in the figures. The system for monitoring a wire bounded perimeter, or monitoring system **10**, uses at least one sensor **14** located at a predetermined location around a protected area **13** to identify activity at the perimeter of the protected area **13**.

Figure 1 illustrates a block diagram of the monitoring system **10** of the present invention. The monitoring system **10** includes a single-conductor wire **12** which bounds an area defined as the protected area **13**. Electrically connected to the wire **12** at predetermined locations are a series of sensors **14** and a transponder **16**. In the illustrated embodiment, the transponder **16** includes a processing device **18**, a gateway **20**, a comparison device **22**, a memory device **24**, an indicator **26**, an external interface **28**, and a power supply **30**. Corresponding elements of the monitoring system **10** are labeled with like numerals.

The transponder **16** serves as the controller for the monitoring system **10**. Specifically, the transponder **16** supplies power, receives data from the sensors **14**, processes the received data, displays information about the processed data, and communicates with external devices, such as a conventional residential and light commercial security system (not shown). The transponder processing device **18** sequences the operation of these functions. One skilled in the art will

recognize that the processing device may be implemented in a variety of ways including discrete logical components (not shown) and a microprocessor (not shown). In the illustrated embodiment, the transponder processing device **18** is a microprocessor to allow the functionality of the transponder **16** to be varied, with minimal hardware changes, through the use of software. Typical functions of the transponder processing device **18** include providing timing to control signal traffic across the wire **12**, requesting information from the sensors **14**, and analyzing the information received from the sensors **14**. Additionally, the transponder processing device **18** generates an output which is sent to an external interface **24**. The external interface **24** translates the output into a form which is usable by a conventional residential and light commercial security system allowing the perimeter monitoring system **10** of the present invention to be integrated with an existing structural intrusion detection system. Such integration allows the perimeter monitoring system **10** to be monitored by an off-premises security monitoring company.

Many of these functions compete for transmission time across the single conductor wire **12**. The gateway **20** manages access to the wire **12**. One skilled in the art will recognize that a variety of electrical components can be used to implement the gateway **20** including switches, multiplexers, gates, and universal asymmetric receiver-transmitters (UARTs). In the illustrated embodiment the gateway **20** is a UART responsive to the transponder processing device **18**. Generally, the transponder processing device **18** directs the gateway **20** which of the various signals has the right-of-way on the wire **12**.

Among the signals competing for use of the wire **12** are information signals directed to one or more sensors **14** from the transponder processing device **18**, and information signals from one or more sensors **14** directed to the transponder processing device **18**. In general, the wire **12** carries a power signal from the power supply **30**. Data signals are encoded into the base signal by applying a modulation technique, such as frequency shift keying.

To monitor activity near the perimeter of the protected area **13**, the transponder **16** requests information from each sensor **14** by sending a data packet containing the appropriate command characters to the particular sensor **14**. When energized, each sensor **14** detects local activity and sends the detected activity signal to the transponder **16** for processing. The transponder **16** compares the detected activity to a variety of exemplary activity signals. Using the comparison result, the transponder then categorizes detected activity within one of the predetermined classes. One skilled in the art will recognize that various types of sensors **14** can be used depending upon the desired monitoring capabilities of the system, including, but not limited to, seismic, infrared, and audio sensors. Further, one skilled in the art will recognize that various levels of sophistication in the discrimination process can be used to provide more specific identification of the activity source.

Figure 2 illustrates a block diagram of the present invention with emphasis on the various embodiments of the sensors **14**. The sensors **14** each include a communication interface **32**, a transceiver **34**, a DC power source **36**, and an activity measuring device **38**. There

are two general types of sensors **14** used in the present invention. First are the wired sensors **14A, 14B, 14C, 14D**. In each of the wired sensors **14A, 14B, 14C, 14D**, the communication interface **32** is a transformer physically coupled to the wire **12**. Next are the mobile sensors **14E, 14F** which operate without actual physical connection to the wire **12**. The communication interface **32** of the mobile sensors **14E, 14F** is a single-turn, inductive antenna placed near, but not directly over, the wire **12** and oriented in a substantially vertical orientation with respect to the wire **12**, thereby creating a mutual inductive coupling allowing bidirectional communication. In the illustrated embodiment, a variety of DC power sources **36** are shown. First is a power conditioning in-line zener diode **36A** connected to wire **12** for generating a DC voltage drop used to power the sensor **34**. Next is a DC transformer **36B** for converting the AC voltage traveling through wire **12** into a DC voltage. Finally, an independent power source **36C, 36D** is shown. The independent power source **36C, 36D** can be a battery or a solar cell. One skilled in the art will recognize that the independent power source **36D** provides the greatest benefit when used in a mobile sensor **14D** such that it can be readily moved without the need for connection to an external power source.

Each of the sensors **14** is provided with a unique identification, or address, allowing the transponder **16** to communicate with a particular sensor **14**. Communication is accomplished using a data packet having a header containing at least a frame synchronization code, at least one command character, at least one address character, and a security code. One skilled in the art will recognize that other

information may be included including, but not limited to, packet size and checksum information. In the illustrated embodiment, the data packet is transmitted using an RS-232 data format. The frame synchronization code is made up of sixteen (16) consecutive logical one bits coupled with no more than four (4) stop bits between the characters in the data packet. The command packet is transmitted through the wire **12** using any appropriate modulation scheme. The preferred embodiment utilizes frequency shift keying (FSK) for transmitting the data packet. One method for implementing a FSK transmission is to use a higher frequency, such as 18 kHz, to transmit a logical one and a lower frequency, such as 14 kHz, to transmit a logical zero.

Figure 3 illustrates the sensor **14** of the present invention. The transceiver **34** includes a sensor processing device **40**, a limiting amplifier **42**, a driving amplifier **44**, and a frequency tuner **46** in communication with a tightly wound ferrite core antenna **48** for monitoring an electromagnetic field for disruptions and for communicating with the transponder **16**. In the illustrated embodiment, the frequency tuner **46** is a capacitor selected to tune the transceiver to the frequency having the desired sensitivity. In the stand-by, or receiver, mode, the driving amplifier **44** is turned off allowing the ferrite core antenna **48** to pick up the signal being carried through the wire **12**. The limiting amplifier **42** amplifies the received signals into logical ones and zeros and presented to the sensor processing device **40** for period measurement using a frequency discrimination technique suited for a small microprocessor. In the

illustrated embodiment, frequency discrimination is achieved by comparing the measured period to a predetermined threshold level. Conversely, in transmitter mode, the driving amplifier **44** is activated and the desired transmission frequency generated by the sensor processing device **40** for the current response character is impressed on the input to the driving amplifier **44** and broadcast by the ferrite core antenna **48**.

When a request is received by the sensor **14**, the activity measurement device **38** is activated to detect local activity. The activity measuring device **38** is positioned and adjusted such that activity near to or approaching the perimeter of the protected area **13** from the outside are detected. The detected activity signal is then encoded by the microprocessor **32** and transmitted to the transponder **16**, of Figure 1, by the transceiver **34**. Returning now to the illustrated embodiment of Figure 1, a digital signal processing device **21** conditions the signal and the transponder comparison device **22** compares the detected activity signal to exemplary activity profiles from selected sources, such as vehicles, animals, and humans, which are stored in the transponder memory device **24**. A result generated from the comparison is generated and interpreted by the transponder processing device **18**. In the illustrated embodiment, the transponder processing device **18** is configured to generate one of four responses: vehicle, human, animal, or no activity, along with the identification of the sensor **14** where the response was generated. Should activity meeting determined characteristics be detected, the transponder processing device **18** then generates an alert which is transmitted to a

user through the indicator **26** and/or to an external conventional residential and light commercial security system through the external interface **28**. One skilled in the art will recognize that the transponder processing device **18** can be configured to selectively transmit alert signals to the various outputs. For example, in one embodiment, when an animal is detected, the monitoring system **10** displays an alert at the indicator **26** but does not pass any information on through the external interface **28**. Similarly, where a human is detected, alerts are sent to both the indicator **26** and the external interface **28**. Further, one skilled in the art will recognize that the indicator **22** can vary depending upon the type and amount of information offered to the user. In the illustrated embodiment, the indicator **22** is a multi-line, alphanumeric display screen which can display the time, date, location, and type of activity. Other types of indications could be utilized, such as audio tones or light-emitting diodes representing a specific condition or location. Finally, one skilled in the art will recognize that other types of information can be communicated through the indicator **22** including, but not limited to, diagnostic information and system status.

Figure 4 illustrates the monitoring system **10'** of the present invention incorporating an electronic pet containment function known to those skilled in the art. To implement the pet containment function, the transponder **16'** additionally includes a signal generator **38'** and a transmitter **40'**. The signal generator generates a radio frequency modulated electromagnetic signal of the type used in typical pet containment systems. The transmitter **40'** transmits the containment signal through the wire **12'**. The pet **15'** to be confined wears a

receiver **17'** configured to receive the containment signal and apply a corrective stimulus upon a predetermined trigger. Because the containment signal must coexist with the other information traveling along the wire **12'**, the containment signal is routed through the gateway **20'** and the timing of the containment signal is controlled by the transponder processing device **18'**.

Figure 5 illustrates a block diagram of a transponder **12''** using an alternate method of classifying the detected activity signals. The transponder **12''** replaces the comparison device **22** and the memory device **24** with a digital signal processing device **25''**. The digital signal processing device **25''** applies a digital filter to each detected activity signal. The filtered activity signal is then classified based on the response characteristics by the processing device **18''**. The transponder **12''** incorporating the digital signal processing device **25''** is uniquely suited to use with a variety of sensor types. For example, the digital signal processing device **25''** can be configured to apply to differing digital filters to each detected activity signal based upon the sensor type, thereby allowing the processing device **18''** to identify activity in a number of differing forms and respond appropriately.

One skilled in the art will recognize that the ultimate function of the monitoring system **10** is to detect and categorize the activity prior to penetration of the protected area **13**. In this regard, various components of the system are interchangeably located without interfering with the objects of the present invention. Specifically, the signal processing device, the comparison device, the memory device, and the processing device may be located in each sensor **14** so that the

transponder **16** simply collects the results and displays the information.

One skilled in the art will recognize that both the transponder **16** and the sensors **14** can include additional electronics, including modulators, demodulators, amplifiers, filters, etc., to enhance the basic function, accuracy, and reliability of the present invention without interfering with the objects of the present invention. Further, one skilled in the art will recognize that, within each of the transponder **16** and the sensors **14,** signals can be communicated between the various components using a variety of methods including the use of a bus.

What has been disclosed is an external perimeter monitoring system using strategically placed sensors connected to a transponder by a single conductor wire bus through which data signals and power signals are sequenced. Activity detected at the sensors is analyzed to classify the source of the activity and an alert is generated if necessary. The external perimeter monitoring system is capable of interfacing with a conventional residential or light commercial security system to allow off-premises monitoring. Further, an alternate embodiment of the external perimeter monitoring system is integrated with a conventional electronic pet confinement system allowing the single conductor wire bus to serve as a radio frequency antenna defining the confinement boundary with the confinement signal added to the data signal and power signal sequencing.

While a preferred embodiment has been shown and described, it will be understood that it is not intended to limit the disclosure, but rather it is intended to cover all modifications and alternate methods falling within the spirit and the scope of the invention as defined in the

appended claims.